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Dave —

"My father-in-law used to tell a story about an old couple who were the first to invest in a cook stove in his neighborhood. ... The neighbors came from near and far to view the stove and it became the center of interest and subject of gossip for the entire neighborhood. Finally the excitement subsided and little was said or heard of the new stove, when one day someone asked Mr. ..... how he liked the new stove by this time. 'Well' the old man answered, 'the stove is all right I reckon, but mother and I are getting too old to lift the tarnal thing on and off the fireplace, so we jest cook the old way.'"

No, this did not happen in Poland, or in North Dakota, either. The story was reported by Granville Stuart in his Forty Years on the Frontier, and if the story was true I gather that it happened in Iowa or somewhere around that part of the country.

Here's another one from the same book: The following Happened in California:

"One night I strolled into one of these

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gambling halls ... and it was here that I lost my faith in the preachers of the Gospel. At home in Iowa we had always attended preaching regularly and our house had been a favorite stopping place for the circuit rider, as mother was an excellent cook and there was always plenty of nice chickens on hand.

"Of these preachers one, Brother Brian, gave a most lurid description of hell-fire and painted a most vivid picture of what would become of us if we did not repent. We hardly knew what we were expected to repent of, but he scared us up plenty. ... lakes of fire and brimstone and devils, big and little with pitch forks. We thought Brother Brian a lucky man to be so good as to be safe from such a pitfall.

"... I had almost forgotten Brother Brian and his hell-fire sermons and certainly when I strolled into the great glittering room full of light and music and excited men and women betting their gold on the lucky or unlucky card, nothing could have been further from my thoughts than Brother Brian. When, lo! at one of the tables sat the self-same man coolly and calmly dealing faro. I said to myself then, he don't believe in hell-fire and never did, and neither do I."

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Dear Dave:

I received the book in good order. Can't say yet whether I'll like it, 'cause I haven't started to read it yet. But it looks like the kind of thing I might like. If it turns out I don't like it, the gift still won't be wasted, cause I can trade it in for another book. Thank you.

There was no serious message in my remarks on the fine art of boasting. The intention was purely humorous.

Yes, women are funny about sex; some of them will talk very frankly about it, but nevertheless are embarrassed by "bad" words and "dirty" jokes. Stella Meister is that way.

I suppose it's like doctors or lawyers. They will speak without embarrassment about their profession, but will get offended if someone makes jokes ridiculing Doctors or lawyers. Same way with women — they don't like jokes that might cast ridicule on their ... er ... profession.*

*It has been asserted that "every woman is a whore". As to whether in opinion is →

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Yes, I have occasionally thought of trying to sell cartoons, but have not been encouraged to actually try it. One problem is that which you mentioned — the difficulty of finding a suitable market for my type of humor. Another problem is the fact that, as you will notice, most of my cartoons are illustrations of some story, joke, or anecdote, and not self-contained jokes needing only a brief caption. I don't too often think of good cartoon ideas of the latter type. Finally, there is the technical problem of preparing the cartoons for publication. I'd have to invest in some good-quality art materials. Also, I assume the cartoons would have to be in ink. If you look closely at my drawings, you'll see that they are full of erasures. I practically always have to go through a lot of trial and error before I get a drawing right. The drawing can then be transferred to another sheet by some such method as tracing, but it commonly loses something in the process.

I can well appreciate your reluctance to go looking for college papers on your way home — I know exactly what you mean. I'm in no hurry about the

or is not accurate, that is a question on which I am not qualified to give an opinion.

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matter. It's just that, sooner or later, I wish I could develop some regular source of income — a very little would suffice — that wouldn't require me to disrupt my way of life by selling myself to an employer. If you never get around to doing that errand, no need to worry about it. One of these days I'll see if I can do a little research on it myself. Library in Helena may have info.

Thanks for calling my attention to the counterexample "la alumna".

By the way, I have just uncovered another piece of important evidence related to the cow-blower project:

"When a calf dies they resort to various devices to persuade its dam to give milk. They stuff the head with straw ... and rub some of the dam's urine on it; or, especially when a cow aborts, they stuff the whole calf, insert stumps of wood to act as legs, and push its head against her teats, while they gently squeeze and pull them and a boy blows up the vagina."

—E.E. Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer; A discription of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People, Oxford Univ. Press, 1972, page 34.

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Of course, Herodotus talked about blowing up the rectum, whereas Evans-Pritchard speaks of the vagina. But we needn't put too much importance on this minor discrepancy; it may well represent an error on Herodotus's part. From what we know of ancient Greek sexual practices, it is evident that they had considerable difficulty in distinguishing between rectums and vaginas.

I am enclosing a brief account of this in Spanish, which you can forward to the Hokens with your next letter. But don't send them a translation of it. I want to tease them. Let them get a dictionary and decipher it for themselves, if they consider it worth the trouble. I should add, though, that in the Spanish account I've used the naughty words: culo and coño, which are equivalent to our "ass" and "cunt". If you think Jean (Jeanne?) will be offended by "coño" you of course can refrain from forwarding the thing.

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Naturally my vanity was tickled by your complimentary remarks concerning my cartoons. In consideration of which I am sending you a drawing I have made, not particularly humorous in intent, of a blacksmithing dwarf. In old Norse mythology the dwarves were considered to be skilled smiths. If we like, we can say that this is the dwarf Mime forging a sword for the young Siegfried, or Sigurd, as the Scandinavians call him.

I have rather an affection for this drawing, so if you don't want to keep it, it would be nice if you sent it back to me when you get tired of looking at it. You are perfectly welcome to keep it permanently if you have any inclination to do so — it's just that I would be loth to have it thrown out.

— Ted,

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